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Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

35TH YEAR

JANUARY 30, 1978

NO. 5

USDA CROP REPORTING BOARD

STATISTICS -- AND HOW WE COME BY THEM

Agriculture is America's biggest business. To operate efficiently every facet of this operation--from the farmer through the marketing processors to the consumer--needs to be reported accurately and on a continuing basis to be effective and profitable. The crops forecast, yields, livestock inventory, consumption rates, and costs of same must be evaluated and available to producers and consumers alike in order for each to make the judgments for their production or purchases. But, how is all this information obtained? By what methods does the U.S. Department of Agriculture depend for these valuable information links?

There are three basic ways that this statistical information is gathered: (1) in person (by interviewing), (2) by mail survey, (3) by telephone. Figures relating to crop acres and land use, livestock inventory numbers, births of pigs and cattle, farm labor and related economic factors, farm population and farm numbers are sought and recorded. There are about 1500 trained enumerators or interviewers in 44 field offices who conduct these surveys and interviews....many of them on a part-time basis.

The collection of prices by USDA started in 1864 for prices received by farmers, and in 1911 for prices paid to farmers. In 1910, USDA started collecting information on prices paid by farmers for some 86 items used in farm production and family living. Today, about 550 items are included in these surveys.

In 1975, the statistical service began a farm family living expenditure survey to provide data for use in the construction of an Index of Prices paid by farmers for goods and services.

TO THE PRESS:

A Crop Reporting Board 1978 Calendar is available (single copies only) on request. It provides dates that the crop information will be available. Also available is the "Crop Reporting Board Catalog", and a pamphlet on "Preparing Crop and Livestock Estimates." Write to the Crop Reporting Board, Rm. 0005 South, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250.

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CONSUMER PRICES

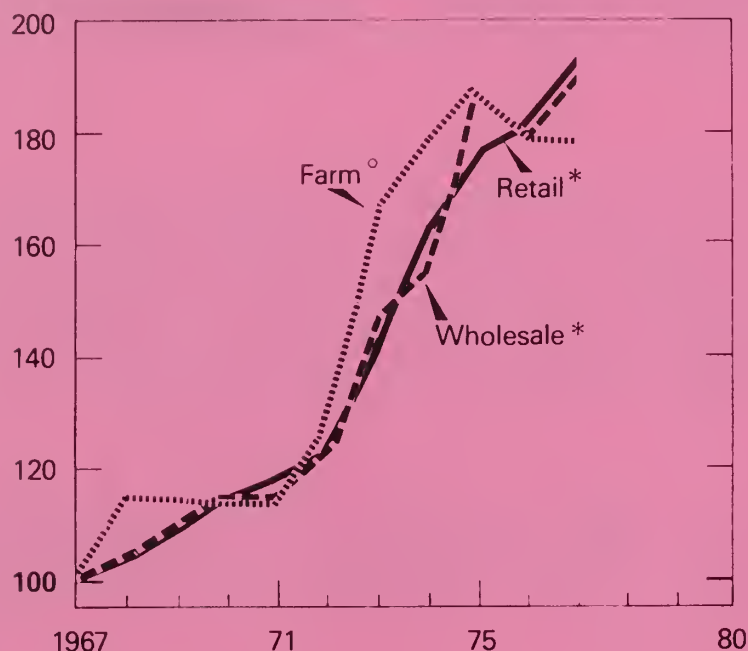
Retail food prices in 1977 will average about 6.5 percent above a year earlier, compared with a 3-percent increase last year, and much sharper jumps during the 3 preceding years. Red meat prices, which led the rapid food price rises in 1973 and 1975, are averaging moderately lower in 1977. But prices for dairy products are higher this year, with poultry and eggs averaging about

the same as in 1976.

Fish and imported foods, especially coffee, will account for about three-fifths of the 1977 food price rise. Average prices for fruits and vegetables are also higher, but lower ingredient costs have limited the rise in cereal and bakery prices despite higher marketing costs.

FOOD PRICES: RETAIL, WHOLESALE, AND FARM VALUE

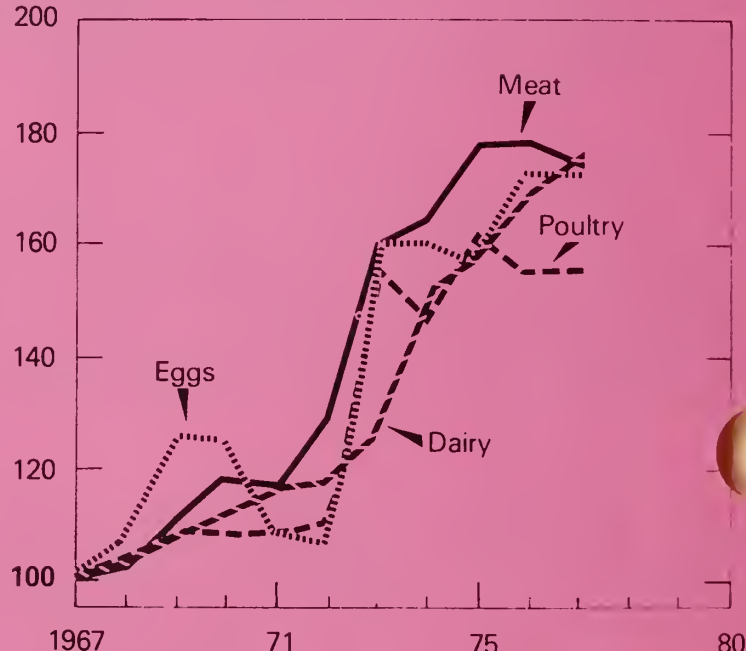
% OF 1967



* ALL FOODS, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS ° PRICES RECEIVED BY FARMERS FOR FOOD COMMODITIES

RETAIL PRICES OF SELECTED LIVESTOCK PRODUCTS

% OF 1967



SOURCE: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

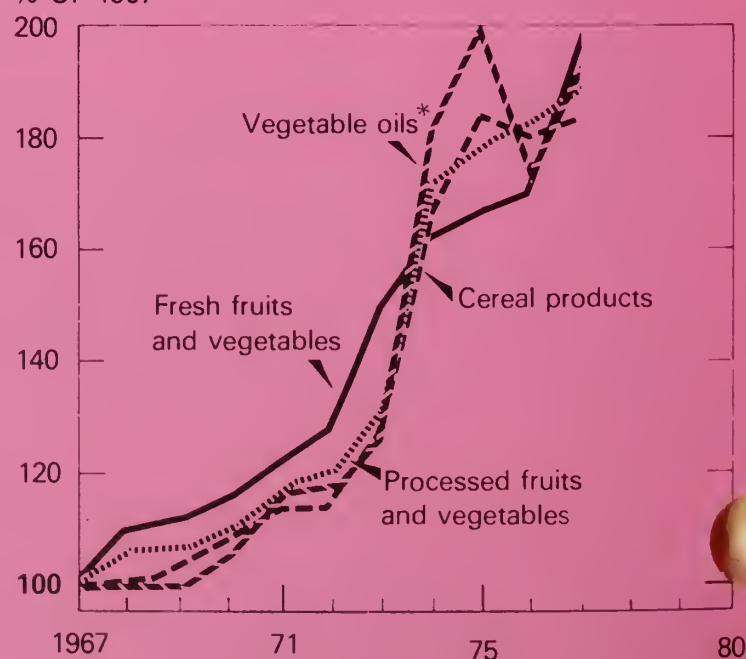
FOOD PRICE INDEXES

	1970	1975	1976	1977 ¹
<i>Percent of 1967</i>				
Farm value ²	114.0	187.1	178.8	178.0
Wholesale ³	113.5	186.0	178.9	188.0
Retail ⁴	114.9	175.4	180.8	193.0
Retail, by food group:				
Meat	117.6	177.9	178.2	174.0
Poultry	108.4	162.4	155.7	156.0
Eggs	125.6	157.8	172.4	173.0
Dairy products ⁵	111.8	156.6	169.3	175.0
Fruits and vegetables:				
Fresh	116.3	166.1	170.2	199.0
Processed	109.2	178.3	183.0	189.0
Cereal and bakery	108.9	184.8	180.6	183.0
Fats and oils ⁵	105.8	198.6	173.7	192.0

¹ Preliminary. ² Prices received by farmers for food commodities. ³ All foods, Bureau of Labor Statistics. ⁴ Includes butter. ⁵ Fats and oils, excluding butter.

RETAIL PRICES OF SELECTED CROP PRODUCTS

% OF 1967



* EXCLUDING BUTTER SOURCE: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

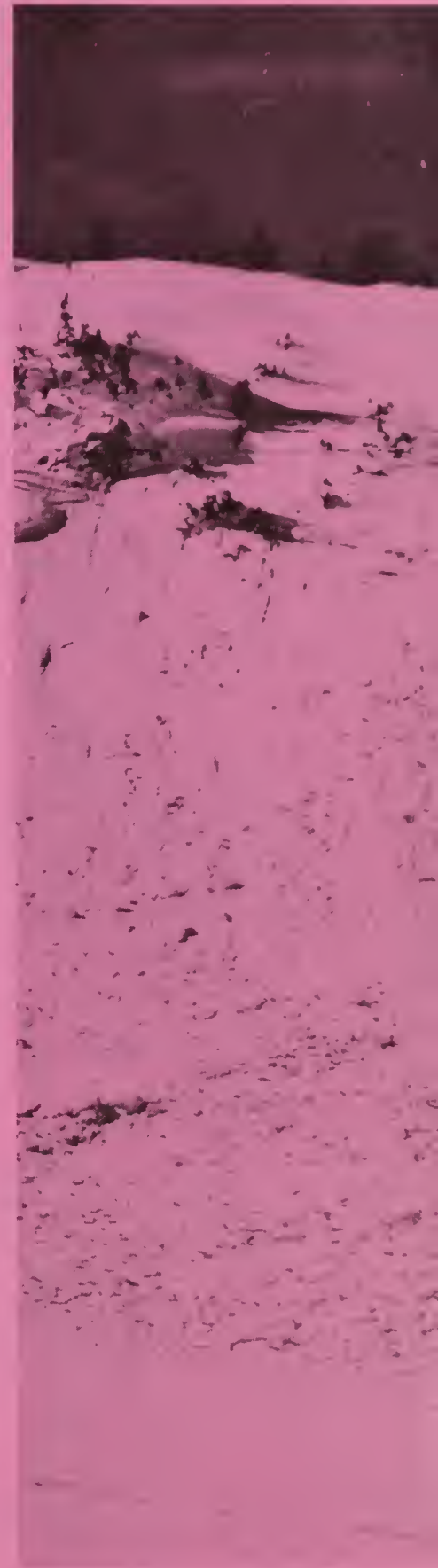
SNOW AND THE AVALANCHE!

A mass of snow that sometimes contains rocks, soil, and ice moving rapidly downslope usually is referred to as an "avalanche". In snow country, people respond immediately to the word--it's that threatening. Avalanches are common on steep, snow-covered mountains everywhere. In the United States, avalanches are reported to the U.S. Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station at Fort Collins, Colorado. About 10,000 are reported per year---and the greatest potential for loss of life is in the ski areas.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to have total control over an avalanche. But, barring the public from hazardous runs is the Number One problem in ski areas. Today, "avalanche control" is considered a science. Among ways of protecting skiers: stabilization of slopes in ski areas by compaction, and the releasing of avalanches by explosives or artillery.

But avalanche hazard control depends on convincing people that the zoning ordinance, ski-run closure, or highway restriction is in their best interest. Even when areas are closed only for a temporary time it must be clearly recognized by the skiers that this move was necessary and that when the hazard is no longer present the area will be reopened.

Public interest and education in these life-saving safety measures are of utmost importance in the ski country. The "Avalanche Handbook", #489, (238 pages) published by the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, is available from the Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 for \$3.95. It's a complete book for understanding snow country, weather conditions and skiing safety.



FILBERTS/HAZELNUTS

...AND NEW REGULATIONS

In mid-February consumers will have greater assurance that the filberts (nuts) they eat are of consistently good quality, according to a new report by the Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. All filberts imported into the United States will be required to measure up to minimum standards required of filberts grown in the United States.

Most of the supply of filberts--or hazelnuts as they are often called--are produced in Oregon and Washington, and the crops are regulated under a federal marketing order. Most imported filberts come from Turkey as shelled nuts, while most imported "in shell" filberts originate in Italy.

The new import regulation of filberts was proposed in October and views were accepted from the public until December 16, 1977. Now, with this regulation, filberts will be added to other commodities like oranges, raisins, and walnuts whose imports are covered by the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937.

FOOD...AND THE WORLD

Japan is the world's largest net importer of agricultural products----and the single most important market for U.S. farm exports. In 1976 the country imported \$11 billion worth of farm products, with \$4 billion worth coming from the United States.

FOOD CLIPS

French-cut green beans means the same as julienne or shoestring---the beans are sliced lengthwise, according to USDA home economists.

* * *

Signs of Spring? First vegetable out is usually the asparagus with supplies exceptionally abundant in early March.

* * *

Weight watching? Take note of the plain, boiled, medium-sized potato... It usually has the same calories as a large apple.

* * *

Milk, the leading source of calcium, provides protein, riboflavin, vitamin A, and many other nutrients.

* * *

Foods valued for their protein content are needed for growth and repair of muscle, organs, blood, skin, and hair.

* * *

Beef, veal, lamb, pork, organ meats such as liver, heart and kidney all provide worthwhile amounts of protein, iron, several of the B vitamins, and food energy.

* * *

Meat alternates--dry beans, dry peas, lentils, and peanut butter--are good "protein buys".

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